

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

## 22nd CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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### **HINCHEY CALLS REPUBLICAN BUDGET PLAN CONTINUATION OF FAILED POLICY**

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) today strongly criticized the Republican congressional leadership for crafting a budget resolution that continues to pursue failed economic policies. The House of Representatives passed the conference report on the budget resolution for fiscal year 2004 early this morning by a vote of 216-211. All Democratic members present voted against the measure, as did seven Republicans and one Independent.

"The president and the Republican leadership of Congress are being driven entirely by their neo-conservative ideology," said Hinchey. "They persist with these irresponsible policies despite all the evidence of failure."

Each year, after the president makes his budget request for the coming fiscal year, Congress passes a corresponding budget resolution, which provides a guideline for the appropriations process. In the Senate, passage of appropriations not included in the resolution requires 60 votes, rather than a simple majority of 51.

In spite of the rising budget deficit, the president and the Republican Congressional leadership have chosen to make a massive tax cut for the wealthy the centerpiece of the FY '04 budget. It will create over \$1 trillion in new debt and increase the national debt to \$4.3 trillion in 2004.

This budget resolution also calls for drastic cuts to important programs. It cuts domestic spending for 2004 by \$7.2 billion, adjusted for inflation. Over ten years the shortfall grows to \$167.7 billion. The resolution cuts appropriations for veterans' health care by a total of \$6.2 billion over ten years. It provides only \$400 billion for a Medicare prescription drug benefit, an amount that barely covers the House Republicans' woefully inadequate plan from last year. It dismantles Medicaid's guarantee of health care for low-income families, ending the entitlement to health care for 14 million people.

"In addition to the fact that this budget takes money away from needed services to give it to the wealthiest people in the country, it does nothing to spur the economy," Hinchey added. "Since President Bush took office, 2.6 million private-sector jobs have been lost. The \$5.6 trillion ten-year surplus has been converted to a \$2 trillion ten-year deficit. Approximately \$4.6 trillion in stock market wealth has evaporated and consumer confidence has plunged to its lowest level in a decade. This budget resolution simply continues the policies that have resulted in these abysmal figures. We're in a deep hole and the Republican strategy is to keep digging."